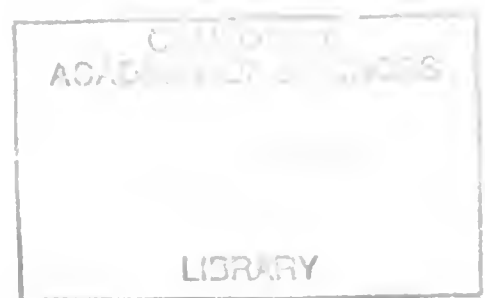




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The Gull

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter
Volume 76 • No. 4 April 1994

GATT and Rice and Wildlife: An Unlikely Association

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The full impact of the GATT agreements will not be felt or completely understood for several years, but there may be some hidden and welcome benefits for California's wildlife that have been overlooked in all of the discussion of side agreements, tariff reductions and improved global commerce.

The Japanese government has been enforcing tariffs on imported rice for decades to protect its domestic rice farmers from competition on the world market. The egregious policy, which protects only a small segment of the Japanese economy, has resulted in Japanese consumers paying seven to ten times more for rice in their domestic markets.

This trade barrier, which became a major point in the GATT discussions in Uruguay, was resolved in December when Japan agreed to open its domestic market to a small quantity of foreign rice. The largest source of foreign rice that will benefit by the relaxed tariffs will be the California rice industry which largely grows a variety of rice favored by the Japanese consumer. This policy signals a major change in Japan's attitude toward trade barriers and together with some cooperative and enlightened work on the part of the California rice farmers harbors some significant benefits for California's wildlife.

It has been estimated that 95 percent of the 4 million acres of California's historic wetlands have been destroyed or seriously modified within the last 100 years. In addition, rice farming is one of

the top five water users in our often-parched state, a fact that has led many environmentally-concerned people to urge a decrease rather than an increase in the amount of acreage devoted to rice. The rice fields traditionally are burned off in the fall and then flooded early in the growing season to minimize the spread of weeds and protect the young plants from insect and larval pests. However, if the fields are left unburned and are flooded in the fall, rice-growing lands in the Central Valley of California can have significance for bird populations that winter and breed in California because *flooded* rice fields provide a viable substitute for natural wetlands that waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species need to maintain their populations. Also relevant is the fact that the waste grain left after the rice harvest is an important source of food for a large number of these species. The rice farmer also benefits by receiving large amounts of free fertilizer left behind in the droppings of these feeding flocks.

In addition to the 26 species of waterfowl using the Central Valley on an annual basis, there are at least 51 species of wetland-dependent birds (shorebirds, egrets, herons, gulls, terns, ibis, cormorants, pelicans, grebes, loons, moorhens and rails) that regularly utilize rice wetlands during their annual cycle. Recent research by the Point Reyes Bird Observatory has indicated that as many as 230,000 shorebirds currently are using the Central Valley. The total wetland bird population using the Valley has been estimated to be between 10 and

12 million. Whatever the true figure, one fact is clear: the Central Valley is home to an enormous number of wetland-dependent birds. We can only guess what the ancestral populations were, but it is certain that major declines have taken place and continue to do so. For example, winter waterfowl numbers have declined by 27 percent in California since 1955, a fact that can be largely traced to the loss of wetland habitats, both here and on the breeding grounds. Without rice farming in the Central Valley, wetland habitats would be reduced by as much as another 45 percent. Such a loss would have a disastrous effect on wetland bird populations.

But what does this have to do with the GATT agreements? Recent evidence indicates that the physical condition of ducks when they leave their wintering grounds has a direct bearing on their breeding success. Part of this physical condition is related to availability of food resources on their wintering grounds and at migratory stopover areas. A similar case can be argued for other species as well. A weak market for rice can translate into a smaller land base under rice cultivation which in turn reduces

the amount of wetland habitat and the accompanying food resources available to waterfowl and the host of other wetland-dependent birds using the Central Valley. Taken to a worst-case scenario, a weak rice market could easily drive farmers out of business or into farming other crop types that have little or no value for wildlife. There is already too much agricultural land being bought by land speculators and held until development interests drive up the market value. Once the land has been developed, it can never be returned to a better use and wildlife suffers.

Hence, the GATT agreements are linked, in part, to an improved rice market, which in turn is linked to a better outlook for the vast host of wetland-dependent species that pass through our borders each year.

As we approach a new millennium, this planet we call Earth has become a small community of nations. Our future, and the commonality of our interests, will no doubt bond us ever more tightly to the realization that we now live in a global community.

Jon Winter, Wildlife Biologist

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Do you have a passion for birds and the natural world? That's possibly the best tool to inspire in others a sense of the wonder and excitement of birds and a desire to protect our environment. Would you consider giving a slide show to a senior citizens group or *Audubon Adventures* classroom about birds and Audubon? Or help us write and design brochures and fact sheets? Or make study boxes to assist teachers with Audubon lesson plans? Do you have ideas about what Audubon might do to inspire others to learn about birds and the natural world?

The Education Committee, long dormant, is about to kick into gear. Come to an informal meeting on April 20th. Call Debey Zito at (415) 648-6861 for location and information.

RAPTOR MIGRATION: LEARN BIRDS OF PREY

Learn to identify hawks, falcons and eagles of California and be part of a local long-term wildlife conservation project. The Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO), a group of 200+ volunteers who track and monitor the autumn raptor migration over the Marin Headlands in

the Golden Gate National Recreation Area is seeking volunteers who can commit one day every two weeks from August to December for the 1994 migration season. Orientation meetings will be held Saturday, April 23, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and Thursday, April 28, from 7 to 9 p.m. at GGNRA Headquarters, Bldg. 201, Upper Fort Mason, San Francisco. Enter at Franklin and Bay. Call Allen Fish or Buzz Hull at (415) 331-0730 for further information.

TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD CENSUS

Tricolored Blackbirds are colonial nesters whose nesting colonies tend to move from year to year. They have been likened to Passenger Pigeons in that their colonies seem to need to reach a critical number of individuals before successful nesting can take place. The species appears to be declining but there is insufficient information about their total numbers, the locations and sizes of the nesting colonies and their foraging areas to ascertain their status and determine their needs. A statewide census of this species will take place on April 23. Contact Bob Barnes at Audubon's Western Regional Office for more information. (916) 481-5332. FAX: (916) 481-6228.

Current and Future Events

March 12 - April 17: Wings: A Show of Birds. Featuring work by Keith Hansen, Phillip L. Greene and others. Marshall Arts, Hog Island Oyster Co., Route 1, Marshall, (415) 663-1318.

April 4: S.F. Conservation Committee. 7:30 p.m. Call office for location.

April 11: East Bay Conservation Committee. 7:30 p.m. GGAS office.

April 14: General Meeting. 7:30 p.m., Berkeley. "Marin Breeding Bird Atlas." See back page for details.

April 16: Birdathon! Form a team. Join a team. Give money. See page 31 for details.

April 20: Education Committee. Call (415) 648-6861 for location. See "Volunteer Opportunities" for details.

April 23: Tricolored Blackbird Census. See "Volunteer Opportunities" for details.

April 23 or April 28: Golden Gate Raptor Observatory Recruitment Meeting. See "Volunteer Opportunities" for details.

April 26: Moonlight Cruise on the Bay. 7 to 10 p.m. Celebrate Audubon's Birthday with a spring evening on the Bay aboard Dolphin Charters' *Delphinus*. Food and drink provided. Cost: \$49 per person -- supports conservation, field trip and education activities. Send check to GGAS office by April 15 to reserve a place.

July 9: GGAS Day at Candlestick Park. Giants vs. the Phillies. Short field trip and picnic at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area before the game. Call Alan Hopkins at (415) 664-0983 if interested.

August 13 - 29: Kenya with Alan Hopkins. \$4195 including airfare from S.F. Call Marcia or Tasha at (800) 223-6078 for information.

Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, April 2

Bodega Bay

Leader: Nancy Konzett (707) 875-2231

Sunday, April 3

Golden Gate Park Easter Walk

CANCELLED

Saturday, April 9

Bothe-Napa Valley State Park

Leader: Gene Hull (510) 525-6893

Note: Rain Cancels

Wednesday, April 13

Mini-trip to Sunol Regional Park

Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman

For details on the above trips, see *The Gull* for March.

Saturday, April 16

Briones Regional Park

For this half-day trip meet at 9 a.m. at the west entrance to Briones Regional Park off Bear Creek Rd.. Meet in the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth.

Directions: Take Hwy. 24 and exit at the Orinda turnoff. Turn left and go back under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to Bear Creek Rd. Turn right and go about 4.5 miles to Briones Regional Park entrance on the right (just beyond Happy Valley Rd.). Or, from Berkeley area, cross through Tilden Regional Park on Wildcat Canyon Rd. and continue across San Pablo Dam Rd. onto Bear Creek Rd. 4.5 miles to the park.

We will be looking for resident birds and early migrants.

Leader: David George (510) 339-0765. \$ (*)

Saturday, April 16

6th Annual Point Reyes National Seashore All-day Spring Birding Blitz

(Joint activity: GGAS/National Park Service)

Meet at 8 a.m. at Five Brooks Trail-head parking lot, approximately 3.5 miles south of Olema on Hwy. 1. We will bird Five Brooks Pond area, Limantour Spit, Drakes Beach, Chimney Rock and Point Reyes, ending at Bear Valley for a multi-habitat trip. Bring water, food, and layered clothes for variable weather.

Leaders: Leon Abrams (415) 453-9980 - work and (510) 843-4107 - home; and Cathy Purchis (510) 865-9482 (*)

Saturday, April 16

Birdathon with Murphy's M.Ob.

Join Dan Murphy's team and be one of his many observers (m.ob.) on the Birdathon. Meet at 7:00 a.m. in San Francisco at the parking lot on Merrie Way just above the Cliff House. We will caravan to Golden Gate Park, Lake Merced, and other

birding hotspots ending perhaps in Mountain View. We will adjourn for dinner at the end of the day. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074.

Saturday, April 23

Sutter Buttes, Sacramento Valley

Birds and wildflowers. Participation is limited and by reservation only. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the town of Sutter. (AAA map of Sacramento Valley is helpful.) Allow two to two and one-half hours driving time from the Bay Area. Drive north on I-5 to Williams, then east on Hwy. 20. Continue about seventeen miles beyond Colusa (toward Yuba City). Watch for a sign to Sutter. Turn left (Acacia Ave.) and drive north one mile. At the first intersection, meet in the parking lot by the church (restrooms available). From there we will carpool and caravan. While learning the history of the Buttes we will be looking for Ferruginous Hawks, Golden Eagles (nesting) and Prairie Falcons; also Canyon Wrens, Phainopeplas, Rufous-crowned Sparrows and early migrants.

A \$30-per-person entrance fee is required to support the Middle Mountain Foundation. (Note: the Sutter Buttes are made up of privately-owned ranches and access is possible only with sponsored trips such as this one.) Checks payable to GGAS must be received in the GGAS office by April 8th. Bring lunch and liquids, layered clothes, and footwear for moderate hiking (possibly wet conditions). Trip will end between 3 and 4 p.m. Co-leaders: Lina Prairie (510) 549-3187 and biologist Don Schmoldt. \$ (*)

Sunday, April 24

Mines Road, Livermore

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot of the Nob Hill Shopping Center. Take I-580 east and turn right on No. Livermore Exit. Continue south two miles to the Nob Hill Shopping Center at So. Livermore and Pacific in Livermore. From there we will caravan on mountain roads to Patterson. Bring food and liquids. We can expect to see Northern Orioles, Lewis' Woodpeckers, and Phainopeplas in this habitat. Golden Eagles, Roadrunners and Wild Turkeys have also been seen on this trip. Those who want to are invited to continue with the group until dark.

Leader: Art Edwards (510) 447-3720 (*)

Saturday, April 30

Birding by Ear in Briones Regional Park

Meet at 8 a.m. at the west entrance to Briones Regional Park off Bear Creek Rd. Meet in the parking area on the left just beyond the fee booth. Directions: see above field trip to Briones on April 16.

Be prepared to hike five miles with lunch and liquids through hilly terrain. Be sure to bring a hat or sunscreen. We will study the songs and calls of common breeding birds of the East Bay. Leader: Dave Cornman (510) 825-2106. \$ (*)

Field Trips (continued)

Sunday, May 1

Wildcat Canyon Regional Park

Meet at 8 a.m. by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Blvd. (next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Bay Rd.) in El Cerrito. From there we will make a short drive to the trailhead on Rifle Range Rd.

We will encounter hills as we walk a transect of the canyon to bird in brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian areas and grasslands. We anticipate seeing a few late migrants and a good representation of nesting birds including Grasshopper Sparrows and Lazuli Buntings. We will also identify common trees of the area. People with allergies should be aware that we will encounter grassy conditions. Bring lunch and liquids for a six-mile hike. The trip will end at 2 p.m. Leader: Malcolm Sproul (510) 376-8945. (*)

Saturday, May 7

Sunol Regional Park

Meet at 8:30 a.m. inside the park entrance at the parking lot on the left. Take I-680 south, turn off at Calaveras Rd. (the freeway sign is marked: Calaveras Rd., Dumbarton Bridge, Calif. 84). Go south (left) and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park, about five miles. Bring lunch and liquids in preparation for a four to five mile walk. We expect to see a variety of the common breeding birds. Leaders: Gloria Markowitz and Ken Ackerman (415) 892-2910. \$ (*)

Wednesday, May 11

Mini-trip to Briones Regional Park

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the west entrance to Briones Regional Park off Bear Creek Rd. Meet in the parking area on the left just beyond the fee booth. Directions: see above field trip to Briones on April 16.

We should see Northern Orioles, Lark Sparrows, Ash-throated Flycatchers and Lazuli Buntings. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Saturday, May 14

Bouvier Audubon Preserve (near Glen Ellen)

This 400-acre preserve is known for its flowering plants (over 350 species) as well as 100 bird species. This trip is by reservation only. Reservations must be received (mail or telephone) by April 29. Address: Bouvier Audubon Preserve, P.O. Box 1195, Glen Ellen, CA 95442. Telephone: (707) 938-4554.

Directions and information about meeting time and place will be mailed to participants. (*)

Sunday, May 22:

Monterey Bay Pelagic Trip

Spring trips on the ocean can be very exciting. Boats headed for deep water hope for Murphy's and Cooke's Petrels and other pterodromas. These are unlikely in Monterey Bay, but not impossible. More probable would be good numbers of shearwaters, jaegers, migrating gulls and terns, perhaps albatross. Trip limited to 27 participants. Cost: \$37.50. Send check to GGAS office to reserve place.

Plan Ahead:

Friday-Sunday, June 3-5

Yosemite National Park. Birding by Ear. Leader: Dave Cornman

Saturday-Sunday, June 11-12

Yuba Pass. Leader: Peter Allen

Friday-Sunday, June 24-26

Lassen Volcanic National Park. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy. This trip is tentative, contingent on Dan's release from jury duty.

For details on above trips, see future issues of *The Gull*.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (*). See below.

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chair (510) 524-2399.

WILDLIFE RECYCLED

It was like a scene from a TV nature show. The East Bay Municipal Utility District had boats out on various reservoirs, conducting its annual survey of Bald Eagles. Bob Richmond, from Ohlone Audubon Society, and I were on a pontoon boat piloted by EBMUD ranger, Pat Solo.

As we left the dam and headed out into Upper San Leandro Reservoir an Osprey flew from its perch and cried out in protest over our intrusion. Further on, a few Canada Geese watched nervously from the shore as we passed by, then went on grazing when we posed no threat. We weren't seeing any Bald Eagles, but our task was to note all wildlife. As we entered the lagoon of Kaiser Canyon, Double-crested Cormorants that were stretching their wings out to dry took flight and a few wary Common Mergansers disappeared under water.

Before we reached the end of the lagoon Pat turned off the motor to let us observe a flock of mixed ducks. They were mostly Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks, Ring-necks and Canvasbacks. While we were taking a count, part of the flock rose from the water and flew toward us. At the moment they arrived overhead we heard the swishing sound of heavy wings nearby. "Eagle!" called Bob. We looked up just as a Golden Eagle, about ten yards above the boat, struck its prey. Lacking the speed and agility of a Peregrine Falcon, the eagle's timing had to be perfect. It was, and the sound of the impact was surprisingly loud.

Scarcely missing a wingbeat, the eagle made a 90-degree turn back toward the hills, the limp form of a Ring-necked Duck firmly in its grasp. The duck, one moment in full flight overhead, was, the next moment, whisked away to become another link in nature's food chain.

Russ Wilson

News from the Ranch

Dan Murphy

Audubon Canyon Ranch is open for the season. Come pay us a visit. Better yet, don't just visit, but be a host one weekend day in April. Help greet other visitors, sign them in, direct them to a parking place and point the way to the herons and egrets . . . a great way to have fun and be useful. Call (510) 843-2222 to volunteer.

New Docents at Bouverie

The Bouverie Audubon Preserve just graduated 32 members in the class of '94. David Bouverie, just back from winter in New York, welcomed each new docent with a ring of the ceremonial bell -- a sort of ringing in of the new. Our new docents will join the ranks of others who lead our education program and the guided nature walks at BAP. Not only that, 10 BAP docents have developed the Juniper Program, an intensive follow-up program for children who have visited the preserve with their classes.

Docent Training '94 at Bolinas

Docents at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve are preparing for you. September will bring the next opportunity for you to join them as a volunteer docent. This is a great chance to help 4th- and 5th-grade children learn about nature, increase your own knowledge of the natural world, and join a truly remarkable group of volunteers. The training program is \$90 and requires that you make a commitment to attend the twenty-two Wednesday training sessions between Sept. 7 and March 1 (this is bargain-priced education). You do get the holidays off. There is also a commitment to remain an active docent for two years. Orientation days are scheduled for May 18, and August 31. Please call (415) 868-9244 for information or for your reservation.

Osher Matching Grant

Our BLP docents are an incredible group of people who love working with children at the Ranch, but they are in need of more space for their library and lab. The Bernard Osher Foundation, recognizing this need, has awarded them a \$75,000 matching grant to pay for the renovation of the storage building at the Ranch. When the work is done, our docents will have a modern, well-equipped facility with space for a library, lab, meeting room, and storage. The grant is a matching one so we cannot take advantage of it without your generosity, but every dollar that you give is worth two dollars to our docents.

Bouverie Guided Nature Walks

Saturdays: April 2 & 9, and May 7 & 28

Join a BAP docent for one of our widely acclaimed half-day nature walks. Registration is free. You can register at the beginning of the month preceding the walk of your choice. Call (707) 938-4554.

SPRING SEMINARS

Participation in all seminars is by advance reservation only. Please call the Ranch at (415) 868-9244 to register or for additional information.

Jellyfish

Saturday, May 7, Cypress Grove Preserve

You know jellyfish are not jelly and they're not fish, but did you know they don't have brains? Imagine what else you don't know about these incredible cnidarians which inhabit the waters of the central California coast. Let Cathleen Cannon help you discover jellyfish. (\$15)

Wildflowers in Watercolor

Saturday & Sunday, May 14 & 15, Bolinas Lagoon Preserve

Join Vesta Kirby and enjoy the late-blooming wildflowers at the Ranch as you learn to use "expressive brushstroke techniques to create lively, colorful paintings." (\$80)

Amazing Coastal Marshes

Saturday, June 18, Cypress Grove Preserve

John Kelly will lead you around Tomales Bay to see a variety of coastal marshes. Marsh ecology varies with the season, salinity, tide and inflow. See the wonderful variety of plants and some of the wildlife which have adapted to these superficially similar, but vastly different habitats. (\$30)

Butterfly Counts

Saturday, June 25, Marin County

Sunday, June 26, Sonoma County

Grab your butterfly net and swagger out in a field to count butterflies. If you don't know how to identify butterflies, or perhaps more importantly how to swagger while carrying a butterfly net, join Ray Peterson at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve on the evening of Wednesday, June 22, for "get-to-know-the-critters" night. Take it from me, Ray can swagger with the best of 'em. In reality this is a very important bit of field work and we do need your help to continue to assess butterfly populations in Marin and Sonoma counties (\$8)

SPEND AN APRIL DAY HOSTING AT AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

Sponsoring Audubon chapters take turns greeting weekend visitors at ACR during the nesting season. This year GGAS has drawn April, a month of mild weather, balmy breezes and migrating birds. It's a chance to spend a few hours outdoors in a lovely place while meeting some new people and promoting the wildlife. We need hosts for April 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24 and 30. Please help us out by calling (510) 843-2222 and volunteering for one (or more) of these days.

Observations

Daniel Singer

Signs of spring begin to surface in our region during February. Wintering birds persist, but some, waterfowl for example, begin showing signs of restlessness as their breeding season approaches. The more sedentary birds start singing more often and persistently. Nesting has already begun for others like Red-tailed Hawk, Great Horned Owl and Anna's Hummingbird. Early spring migrants are in evidence as well. By the end of the month Allen's Hummingbirds abound, Tree and Violet-green swallows are dashing overhead, Turkey Vultures are drifting northward. . .

Though not unprecedented, inland sightings of Laysan Albatross (or any pelagic species for that matter) are always remarkable. One observed during stormy weather on the 19th south of Sonoma (HK) was most likely the same individual reported on the 20th over Vallejo and picked up in Martinez for rehabilitation after flying into a powerline (MB). Another Laysan was seen from the Arena Cove Pier, MEN, on 2/27 (JBo). All pelagic species reports this month were from land-based observers. Black-vented Shearwater was reported in small numbers (up to five) off Pigeon Point, SM, during several sea watches between the 8th and the 27th (RSTh). Two probable Ashy Storm-petrels were seen along the Hayward Shoreline on the 5th (CTL). This follows sightings in January of a Leach's and an Ashy storm-petrel off Johnson's Landing (RJR).

A **Whooper Swan** was reported from White Lake in Siskiyou County on 2/26-27 (DPo). This is probably the same individual seen there two years ago. Up to four Trumpeter Swans were at Tule Lake NWR, SIS, between 2/5 and 2/19 (DSi, AW). Numerous Tundra Swans were also reported from these locations. Additional Tufted Duck reports this month include up to two in Vallejo 2/20-22, and an impressive five at Novato on 2/8. High counts this month of some of

our scarcer ducks include five Oldsquaw on the 8th at Point Reyes (LLu), twenty-two Black Scoters off the Pacifica Pier on the 25th (DSg) and thirteen Barrow's Goldeneye in Mountain View on the 27th (m.ob.).

Four Swainson's Hawks in San Joaquin County on 2/20 (LLu) was intriguing. Is this winter rarity expanding its range and numbers or might these be early spring migrants? The **Gyr Falcon** was reported through the 20th (m.ob.) from the Smith River Bottoms in Del Norte County.

For the third winter in a row, a **Stilt Sandpiper** was reported from the Central Valley. This one was at Merced NWR on February 20 (GMk, KA). Prior to the winter of 91-92, there were no valid winter records for this species in our region. The Merced NWR area also hosted a Ruff on 2/17 (JC). The **Common Black-headed Gull** was last reported on 2/9 from the Sunnyvale Sewer Ponds and at least a dozen reports of Glaucous Gull were received from Mendocino to Santa Clara County (both m.ob.).

A Red-naped Sapsucker was seen along Coyote Creek on 2/28 (SCR). Two wintering Hammond's Flycatchers were discovered: one was present from 1/13 through 2/24 near Butano State Park, SM, (BMck, RSTh) and another was at Del Valle Regional Park, ALA, from 2/5 - 17 (ALE, KGH, SGI). San Jose's Eastern Phoebe continued through the 26th while another returned to Davis for its second winter 2/27 - 28 (JMHu, DSb). The Tropical Kingbird in San Francisco remained through at least March 2 (m.ob.).

Up to three Sage Thrashers were seen near Mercy Hot Springs in Fresno County on 2/12 (SA, CKf). A Northern Shrike in Golden Gate Park was reported on 2/21 (MH). Though perhaps overdue, this species has not been recorded in the city before (at least in modern times) to the best of my knowledge. A report of

one from Middle Lake is certainly unexpected. These days Loggerhead Shrike in San Francisco is exceptional.

Reports of wintering warblers declined significantly this month. Most notably, the Tennessee Warbler continued at Bodega Bay through 2/13 (DS) and the **Black-throated Green Warbler** was still present in Eureka until 2/21 (LP).

A Green-tailed Towhee here for its second winter was still in Concord on 2/23 (NS). Another was found along Coyote Creek on 2/25 and still present through 3/2 (SCR, m.ob.). This certainly has been a good winter for spizella sparrows. Up to 8 Chipping Sparrows continued in Solano County through 2/12 (m.ob.); a Clay-colored Sparrow was at Bodega Bay on 2/6 (DHo); and the **Field Sparrow** in Martinez was still being seen through at least March 1 (m.ob.). In Fresno County, a **Black-throated Sparrow** was discovered on 2/12 (CPe, SA) with a small flock of Sage Sparrows near Mercy Hot Springs (several miles north of Panoche Valley). A rarity anytime in our region, it is particularly so during winter. Most, if not all, of the handful of reports during this season have come from the interior. Up to three Chestnut-collared Longspurs were seen with a large flock of American Pipits along Sierra Road Summit, SCL, from 2/21 through 2/26 (MMR, SCR, MJM).

Observers: Ken Ackerman, Steve Allison, Murry Berner, Jim Booker, Joan Coston, J. Scott Cox, Art Edwards (ALE), Alan Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner, Mike Healy, David Hoffman, Alan S. Hopkins, Joan M. Humphrey, Harrison Karr, Tim Laughlin, Cin-Ty Lee, Leslie Lieurance, John S. Luther, Michael J. Mammoser, Gloria Markowitz, Bert McKee, Joe Morlan, Courtenay Peddle, Linda Petrus, David Powell, Robert J. Richmond, Mike M. Rodgers, Steve C. Rottenborn, Nancy Sasser, David Shuford (DS), Dianne Sierra (DSi), Dan Singer (DSg), Rich Stallcup, Scott B. Terrill, Ron S. Thorn, Alan Wight

Data thanks to Joe Morlan and the Northern California rare Bird Alert.

BIRDATHON! 1994: APRIL 16

\$10,000.00!! That's our goal for Birdathon 1994. Helping GGAS reach that goal can be rewarding, easy and definitely fun. Half of the funds raised will go to National Audubon to be designated for the Save Mono Lake Campaign and the other half will go to our local *Audubon Adventures* program. That's the rewarding part. If you want to go for Birdathon-easy, this is what you do: choose your favorite birding team and pledge any amount of money per species counted by that team on their Birdathon. The team leader will send you a bill and a recounting of the day and you write a check and send it to GGAS. Now, if it's active fun that you're looking for in a Birdathon experience, then you have two choices. You can form your own Birdathon team, come-up with a catchy name, have your team members gather pledges that total at least \$1.00 per species, and then go out and bird till you drop on April 16. Or you can join Murphy's M.O.B., gather pledges from your friends and pledge money yourself for each species you and the MOB count on Birdathon day, then bird until it's time for the traditional after-the-Birdathon dinner. Whichever path you choose, getting started is especially easy: just fill in the pledge form below and return it to the GGAS office.

Remember, Birdathon is FOR THE BIRDS, so get out there and do something!

Terry Schmitt (415) 282-0261

I pledge to sponsor the team(s) checked-off at the rate of \$_____ per species or \$_____ (flat amount.)

- _____ Allen Hopkins and the **LOONATICKS**
- _____ David Rice and the **BIKING BUSHED KIDS**
- _____ Nancy Conzett with the **BODEGA BAY BUSHTWITS**
- _____ Ann Dewart and the **NOT-SO-OLDSQUAWS**
- _____ Steve Margolin, Lina Prairie and crew birding in Ecuador
- _____ **MURPHY'S M.O.B.** with Dan Murphy

_____ I pledge to support the team with the HIGHEST species count at a rate of \$_____ per species.

_____ I pledge to support the team with the LOWEST species count at a rate of \$_____ per species

_____ I enclose a contribution of \$_____ (make checks payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society)

_____ I will lead my own team and gather pledges of at least \$1.00 per species.

_____ I would like to join Murphy's M.O.B.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

ELECTION

The Nominating Committee has proposed the following slate of new officers. Please vote using the ballot below and mail it to GGAS, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, California 94702, by May 1, 1994.

President

_____ Janice Anderson - '96

Vice President

_____ Debey Zito - '96

Second Vice President

_____ Lina Jane Prairie - '95

Recording Secretary

_____ Leslie Lethridge - '95

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APRIL MEETING: DAVE SHUFORD AND THE MARIN COUNTY BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

Thursday, April 14 7:30 p.m.
Northbrae Community Church
941 The Alameda
Berkeley

The Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas: the long-awaited book has finally been published! Author David Shuford will discuss the Atlas, the project, and sign copies of the book at our April program in Berkeley. The program will begin at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 14th, at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley.

The book documents County's breeding birds and for all species on habitat needs, habits, foraging strategies and Dave will discuss what a breed-revolutionized the way we look of the results of the Marin At-proceeding elsewhere in Cali-opportunity to learn more about first book on Marin County's

Dave Shuford gradu- with a Master's degree in Ecol- Point Reyes Bird Observatory ever since. Although Dave's field work has ranged from the Arctic tundra to the Antarctic icecap, his main research interests are the distribution, abundance and habitat needs of California birds. Dave is currently documenting the importance to shorebirds of wetlands throughout the west with his work on the Pacific Flyway Project. In addition, he is studying the effects of changing lake levels on the breeding California Gull population at Mono Lake and, with another atlas project, is documenting the breeding distribution and habitat needs of birds in the Glass Mountain region of Mono County.

Copies of the recently-published book, *The Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas: A Distributional and Natural History of Coastal California Birds*, will be available for sale and signing for \$26.76. This is a program of special interest to GGAS members: Dave is an old friend to many who participated in the Marin atlas project as well as the more recent shorebird censusing for the Pacific Flyway Project. In addition, we are presently embarked on our own 5-year Alameda County Breeding Bird Atlas project so Dave's words of wisdom and experience are all the more welcome. Join us for this interesting program and take home a book in time for your spring birding trips!



the distribution of all of Marin provides detailed information nesting sites, food require- historical population trends. ing bird atlas is and how it has at bird distribution, what some las are, and how atlas is fornia. Don't miss this our nesting birds and see the diverse birdlife.

ated from U.C. Davis in 1975 ogy and has been a biologist at

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As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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